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SUBJECT: MONUC peacekeepers arrest CNDP "police" following incident near Virunga National Park

¶1. MONUC peacekeepers came under fire from CNDP "police" February 15 in Tongo, 50 kilometers north of Goma. They disarmed them, and found two bodies villagers said the police had executed. No peacekeepers were killed.

¶2. The incident began mid-afternoon when South African peacekeepers based at MONUC's mobile operating base at Tongo, in Rutshuru territory about 50 km north of Goma, heard shooting and sent out a patrol. Members of the patrol saw people running towards the UN compound followed by CNDP police escorting a prisoner. After being ordered to stop, the police fired on the MONUC troops who returned fire, then disarmed and arrested them.

¶3. The patrol continued to the site where the original shots were fired in the nearby village of Rushoro, and found two dead bodies, one that of a child. The police admitted to killing two people, claiming they were Mayi-Mayi in civilian clothes. World Food Program and Mercy Corps representatives who arrived in the village before the patrol said villagers had told them CNDP had executed the two after robbing them.

¶4. MONUC did not get out a press release about the incident until the following day. SRSC chief of staff John Almstrom told international facilitators February this was due to conflicting reports, including one which indicated a ceasefire violation between CNDP and the PARECO Mayi-Mayi group, and another which suggested that the CNDP had fired on a humanitarian convoy -- something that was not true.

¶5. Comment: This is yet another example of the continued human rights violations that plague this part of North Kivu, which is a key point on the CNDP's main resupply route through Virunga National Park. End comment.

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